

## THE WIDOW SPIDERS OF HAWAI'I\*

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The spiders credited with being the most dangerous in North America are collectively known as "widow" spiders. These spiders belong in the genus Latrodectus and possess a dangerous venom producing neurotoxic symptoms.

In Hawai'i, the principal species is Latrodectus geometricus, the Brown Widow. In addition, two other species, L. mactans, the Southern Black Widow, and L. hesperus, the Western Black Widow, have also been introduced into the State. Data gathered from a single female specimen suggests hybridization, mactans x hesperus, has occurred on Maui.

The internal diagnostic characters will be discussed as well as the distribution of these species in the Hawaiian archipelago.